

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

1/26/82

January 26, 1982

Argentina
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Dear Mr. Mendez:

I am responding to your letter of January 11 regarding the case of Daniel Alejandro DiBernardo, whose case was brought to your attention by Emilio Mignone.

On January 7, the Federal Police of Argentina presented Mr. DiBernardo at a well publicized press conference. According to the police DiBernardo "had never been disappeared or kidnapped. He wanted to spend his vacation with the family of his fiancée in Rosario."

The police spokesman went on to accuse human rights organizations, which had publicized DiBernardo's disappearance, of seeking to confuse public opinion. DiBernardo appeared at the press conference which was on TV news. He confirmed the police version that he had not been seized or mistreated.

The Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS), headed by Emilio Mignone, quickly replied to the police statement. In its release, CELS maintained that DiBernardo had been forced into a car on November 30, in front of witnesses, and was not heard from again until January 7. The CELS statement argues that human rights organizations have the right and duty to publicize such events "in the face of thousands of disappearances". The police have again reaffirmed their story and renewed their criticism of human rights organizations.

Sincerely,



Elliott Abrams
Bureau of Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs

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